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SUBJECT: QADISIYAH INA LEADER: BADR ORGANIZATION IS SETTING UP SADR POLITICAL OFFICE FOR A FALL

CLASSIFIED BY: Alfred Fonteneau, Regional Coordinator, REO Al Hillah, Dept of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶11. (S) SUMMARY: In a August 2 meeting with REO staff, Abd Muslim, the head of the moderate Iraqi National Accord party in southern Qadisiyah (Diwaniyah) province, warned against attributing all instability in Diwaniyah Province to the Mahdi Militia (MM). Muslim believed that local MM cells are frequently manipulated by provincial Badr Corps officers into violence as a way of setting up Moqtada al-Sadr's political arm, the Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS), as a target of Coalition Forces. He noted that the political party Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and Badr Corps have an uneasy relationship in Qadisiyah. Muslim saw provincial SCIRI head Hassan al-Zamari and Badr Organization commander Al-Khaldri as rivals. The struggle between them extended to the provincial police with SCIRI attempting to remove an ineffectual Badr Corps officer from the Chief of Police post. Muslim blamed Qadisiyah's high incidence of assassinations on Badr. He predicted that Coalition Forces targeting of OMS leaders would backfire given that they often serve as a restraint on militias susceptible to influence from Iranian intelligence officers acting through Badr agents. END SUMMARY

¶12. (S) The August 2 meeting with Abd Muslim was as a follow-on to a discussion of Diwaniyah's security problems between REO staff, Qadisiyah Governor Hamza, and eight Provincial Council members of a newly formed security committee (reftel). Muslim stated that the Security Council's meetings with the REO and MND-CS personnel on Camp Echo had led Governor Hamza to call an immediate meeting with all high ranking police commanders. Muslim and Governor Hamza, in a separate phone call to REO staff, related that the Security Committee and Hamza had threatened police commanders with arrest if indirect fire attacks against Camp Echo occurred from their areas of responsibility. The Governor divided the city into eight areas, assigning each area to teams of six police officers.

¶13. (S) Muslim saw the Governor's willingness to demand more from provincial police as a positive sign, but warned that Governor Hamza and SCIRI head and Provincial Council Chairman Hassan al-Zamaly were frustrated by their inability to fire Police Chief General Abdel Abbass. Abbass, Muslim claimed, benefited from the protection of national Badr Corps leader Al-Amary. Al-Amary, Muslim claimed, was more interested in protecting Badr Organization autonomy and influence in provincial secrecy than backing SCIRI in the Provincial Council.

¶14. (S) Muslim stated that the new Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS) leader in Diwaniyah, Abdul Razak al-Madali, was willing to work with the provincial security committee. He noted that al-Madali intended to go on television and announce that JAM units were not responsible for attacks on Camp Echo. To Muslim,

this was a sign that OMS was willing to work with the committee to restrain JAM units. Consequently, he said, Badr commanders in the province were under orders to incite MM members embedded in the police to conduct attacks against Coalition Forces whenever possible. Their ultimate aim, Muslim said, was to discredit OMS and provoke Coalition Forces into raiding OMS headquarters and arresting key personnel.

¶ 5. (S) Muslim said that a serious issue in restoring security is the overall incompetence of the current provincial Police chief. Xxx remains in place because of his solid Badr Corps credentials, Muslim remarked, pointing out that he was never more than a First Lieutenant in the Iranian Army. Muslim described a complex tug-of-war between Badr, SCIRI, and the Provincial Council Chairman, who, while nominally SCIRI, works more for Badr. In Qadisiyah, Muslim said, SCIRI and Badr, while nominally affiliated, are actually competing for autonomy and control over security decisions in the province. In the meantime, he said, Badr would go ahead financing and controlling Sadrist attacks while conducting its own aggressive assassination campaign against ex-Baathists, translators, and independents.

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